

I support the Fists CW Club petition. As an active amateur radio operator first licensed in 1959, I see the value of Morse code communications on the amateur bands, and I regard Morse as a language, not merely a mode of communications. Unlike other codes, such as ASCII and Baudot, it has the unique advantage of being decodable by ear and transmittable by hand using a simple on/off switch (telegraph key). In addition to its simplicity (which has obvious advantages in emergency situations), it also serves as a common language for amateur radio operators, bridging continents, generations, and license classes. I support retaining code testing for amateurs as a literacy test-- 5 wpm constitutes a basic literacy, while the 12 wpm level demonstrates some conversational fluency in the Morse language.

Except for certain handicapped individuals (for which the FCC has long provided exceptions), I do not believe such testing would impose an undue hardship on anyone seriously interested in participating the amateur service. Moreover, with the widespread availability of electronic audio and computer equipment, today there are more ways available for learning Morse than ever before.

I also firmly believe that individuals who have not established basic literacy in the Morse language (at the 5 wpm level) are not qualified to judge the usefulness of its application in the CW mode in amateur communications.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Guenther, Jr.
Amateur Callsign: NI0C